



Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail Office Fiscal Year 2009 Activities Report



New Wayside Exhibits along Trail Segments in the Virginia Piedmont

A new suite of orientation and interpretive wayside exhibits are being installed along Trail segments between Great Falls Park in northern Fairfax County and Keep Loudoun Beautiful Park on Goose Creek in Loudoun County. Delivered in late May 2009, the two and one-half year project culminates with installation by park staff over the summer and into the early autumn. Additional Trail orientation exhibits have been installed at Leesylvania State Park and are being installed at Veterans Park in Prince William County, Virginia.

Publications

Between Locust Shade Park and the Occoquan River: A new brochure in NPS “unigrid” format, presents an overview of the Trail corridor in Prince William County, Vir.; existing, planned and potential routes; and partner agencies and organizations.

Northern Neck Heritage Trail Bicycling Route Network as a Segment of the PHNST: With support from staff of the Northern Neck Planning District Commission, county planners, and the National Park Service (NPS), BikeWalk Virginia published a brochure and map illustrating the connections among bicycling routes, boat launch areas, hiking trails, historic sites, and communities.

NPS Potomac Heritage NST “unigrid” brochure: Copies of the Trail brochure, revised and reprinted in early 2009, were distributed throughout the Trail corridor. As always, we would appreciate an estimate of the quantity you need annually and corrections for future additions.



The PHT Network in Numbers

As of mid-2009, the Trail network stands at 832 miles (rounded), of which 743 are available for use. (Conversely, 89 miles of designated routes are planned segments, or “gaps.”) We have recognized 24 “segments” in 39 local jurisdictions (including Washington, DC), with lengths ranging from two-mile routes in Scott’s Run Nature Preserve (in northern Fairfax County) and on Government Island (in Stafford County) to the 184.5-mile C & O Canal Towpath. An analysis completed in May 2009 indicates the potential for approximately 269 miles of additional trails on land, for a total potential network of approximately 1100 miles. Recognition and development of water trails (e.g., the Potomac River Water Trail, Youghiogheny River Water Trail, etc.) would add another dimension to the experience of the Trail corridor as well as substantial miles to the Trail network.



12th National Conference on Scenic and Historic Trails

Sarah Thayer, Student Conservation Association Intern, represented the Trail Office at the conference in Missoula, Montana, in July 2009. Among a special contingent of young adults, Ms. Thayer was elected to speak on behalf of the group, initiated a blog and plans to continue a dialogue among participants. For more information about the conference, see <http://www.nationaltrailspartnership.org/>; to connect with the youth discussion, see <http://groups.google.com/group/pnts-group?hl=en>.

Legislation

The Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009: Congress amended the legislation for the Trail by: a) removing the requirement that local and state agencies must apply for designation of a trail as a segment of the National Scenic Trail and b) providing “willing seller” authority similar to other NSTs, adding the condition that “No land or interest in land outside the exterior boundaries of any federally administered area may be acquired by the Federal Government for the trail except with the consent of the owner of the land or interest in land.” As a consequence of (a), we will be developing and executing agreements for management of Trail segments according to Section 7 of the Act.

U.S. Army Garrison Fort Belvoir & the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail: S. 3001, the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009, which is now Public Law 110-417, included a provision authorizing an “extension of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail along the perimeter of Fort Belvoir, Virginia.” Specifically, Section 2847 authorizes the Secretary of the Army to enter into a revocable at will easement with the Secretary of the Interior to provide for a single trail and select alignments, subject to certain provisions.

Section 11 (designation of the Potomac Heritage NST) in the National Trails System Act of 1968: We have requested formally, through submission of a legislative proposal to the Department, the removal of the clause in the authorizing legislation that prohibits designation of trails in the State of West Virginia as segments of the NST.

Communications & Coordination

- distributed FY08 annual report (see www.nps.gov/pohe) and one mid-year report
- organized Trail corridor-wide workshop, co-sponsored by the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, at Algonkian Regional Park
- assisted with organizing discussions among the Progress Fund, volunteers and staff for towns along the middle Potomac section of the C&O Canal Towpath, and staff of C & O Canal NHP (see www.trailtowns.org)
- responded to a survey on trails and trail connections in Pennsylvania
- provided content for magazine and news articles
- reviewed proposed organization of www.potomacallegheny.org and
- submitted Trail Web site content for translation into Spanish

Interpretation

In addition brochures and wayside exhibits, activities in the realm of interpretation include:

- revising, publishing and distributing a new edition with a updated map indicating all existing and planned segments of the Trail network;
- expanding content on the NPS Trail Web site, managed by SCA Intern/Communications Assistant Sarah Thayer;
- reviewing and approving a Phase II Exhibit Pan for the Great Allegheny Passage
- requesting recognition for Trail segments on all relevant NPS unigrid publications (i.e., the brochures for National Park units);
- completing a wayside exhibit describing the effort to preserve lands now known as Scott's Run Nature Preserve participated in a commemorative event at Scott's Run Nature Preserve;
- approving text for translation into Spanish and on to the NPS Web site;
- editing text for a new wayside exhibit, being produced for installation at "The Point" in Harpers Ferry, to illustrate the significance of the intersection between the Appalachian and Potomac Heritage national scenic trails on the C&O Canal Towpath; and
- participating in events at Scott's Run Nature Preserve; Brunswick, Md.; Leesylvania State Park; and the Laurel Highlands.

While the National Park Service is responsible for administration of the Federal interest in the Trail—executed primarily through coordination, communications, and technical and financial assistance—there are many volunteers and staff of government agencies, non-profit organizations and businesses who invest their time, expertise and funds to develop and manage the expanding network of Trail segments, to conserve the Trail corridor, and to provide rewarding Trail experiences. A few examples of such investments over the past year include:

- ❖ development of amenities and services by the Progress Fund and local and state partners along the Great Allegheny Passage, expanding such assistance to include towns along the C & O Canal Towpath;
- ❖ over 50 volunteers clearing almost two miles of new trail corridor in Bles Park, organized by the Potomac Heritage Trail Association, REI and the Loudoun County Dept. of Parks, Recreation and Community Services;
- ❖ construction of a one-mile+ trail in Locust Shade Park, south of the National Museum of the Marine Corps, by Prince William Trails and Streams volunteers;
- ❖ route evaluation and inter-county coordination completed by the Southern Maryland Resources Conservation and Development Area Board and local volunteers and staff;
- ❖ organization of National Trails Days events; and
- ❖ planning and exhibit design by NPS staff for the Fort Circle Parks Trail in the District of Columbia.

Trail Projects

Riverbend Park: After years of perseverance, design, preliminary engineering and field archaeology are complete, a contract has been awarded, and a bridge over Clark's Branch is being constructed, with completion expected in mid-November. The POHE Office participated in design and draft reviews, provided financial support for design and archeology, and participated in 106 consultations with various Indian tribes and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. Trail funds also supported a student Conservation Association Trail Crew during summer 2009.

Woodlawn Historic District: Following periodic planning and design workshops over the past two years, a consultant to the Trail Office provided staff of the Federal Highways Administration (and consultants), National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the Society of Friends with a draft plan or interpretive wayside exhibits along a segment of the Trail and related trailheads in the Historic District, a major node in the Trail corridor between Mount Vernon Estate and Gardens and Accotink Wildlife Preserve in Fort Belvoir.

Other projects:

- Virginia Greenways and Trails Task Force:** edited sections on the Potomac Heritage NST for the report on long-distance trails in the Commonwealth of Virginia
- Fort Circle Parks Trail:** requested that the rail be included in the "Proposed Federal Capital Improvements Program" list managed by the National Capital Planning Commission; SCA Intern/Communications Assistance Ahmad Toure researched and organized content for a Web page devoted to the FCPT
- Potomac River Water Trail:** consulted with staff of Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources and C & O Canal NHP on marking systems and coordination among stakeholders
- Youghiogheny River Water Trail:** reviewed management plan and a draft application for designation as a Trail segment
- Southern Maryland PHT bicycling route:** consulted with Prince Georges County Bicycle and Trail Advisory Group and Southern Maryland Resource Conservation and Develop Board on route marking, and requested estimates to produce a route-marking sign, according to official standards, to mark Potomac Heritage Trail on-road bicycling routes



Trail Projects continued...

- **Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail:** a) submitted comments to the Penn. Dept. of the Environment on an application for a mine within the LHHT view- and soundshed; b) reviewed and provided content for the Interpretive Plan for Laurel Ridge State Park and environs
- **Washington Rochambeau NHT:** consulted on administration and development of the new designation within the NPS National Capital Region
- Reviewed and commented on projects in Dumfries, Vir.; Loudoun County, Vir., properties adjacent to Red Rock Wilderness Regional Park; towns along the C&O Canal NHP



Administration

- Revised project and operations funding requests and completed status reports
 - consulted on and approved final report on tasks to establish a **Potomac & Allegheny Alliance** among Trail marketing partners; submitted Challenge Cost-Share Program application to support follow-up tasks
 - drafted legislative proposal to eliminate language in the National Trails System Act prohibiting designation of trails in the State of West Virginia as segments of the PHNST
 - reviewed and approved deliverables including a pod cast narratives for use along the **Alexandria Heritage Trail** (NVRC);
 - drafted a memorandum of understanding for review by the Department Solicitor and the U.S. Army Fort Belvoir to establish a formal partnership for development and management of the Trail segment within the post
 - approved final report on Great Allegheny Passage Phase II Exhibit Plan
 - supervised the Program Leader for the **Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program** in the National Capital Region
 - drafted template agreements for management of Trail segments a) on lands administered by federal agencies, and b) by non-federal entities
 - responded to approximately 50 requests for information about the Trail
 - completed mandatory training
 - donated an event tent to volunteers with the **Potomac Heritage Trail Association**
- *executed cooperative agreements with:*
- **Bikewalk Virginia** to support development of content, design and publication of a brochure and map illustrating the Northern Neck Heritage Trail Bicycling Route Network as a segment of the Trail
 - **C & O Canal Trust** for administration in support of the Potomac & Allegheny Alliance
 - **Student Conservation Association** to support two interns and one trail crew
 - **Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority** to develop Trail segments and to draft travel itineraries
- *contracted with:*
- **Garrett County Trails, Inc.**, for a display of potential Trail routes, volunteer coordination and coordination among trail development interests
 - International Mapping Associates for a new map of the Prince Georges County **PHT On-Road Bicycling Route**
 - Toole Design Group, LLC, for a feasibility study of a Trail segment within the boundaries of **U.S. Army Garrison Fort Belvoir** to establish continuity of a Trail network in southern Fairfax County
 - **BikeWalk Virginia** for a travel itinerary between the Arlington Memorial Bridge and Reedville, Virginia and for distribution of brochures at the Northern Neck RiverRide
 - You Are Here Exhibits for a narrative describing the Trail corridor in southern Fairfax County and a draft wayside exhibit plan for the **Woodlawn Historic District**



More Information

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